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Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. Following a recommendation by the World Conference on Human Rights, the General Assembly, by its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995–2004). The goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, culture, the environment, development, education and health. The theme of the Decade is "indigenous people: partnership in action."

2. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly adopted the programme of activities for the Decade. One of the main objectives of the Decade is the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the further development of international standards and national legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous people. Another major objective of the Decade is to further the implementation of the recommendations pertaining to indigenous people of all high-level international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and, the World Conference on Human Rights, in particular its recommendation that consideration be given to the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system.

3. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly recommended that the objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes that would improve the lives of indigenous people and that could be evaluated halfway through the Decade (1999) and at its end (2004).

4. In its resolution 52/108, the General Assembly decided to appoint the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as coordinator for the Decade. The High Commissioner is requested to submit to the General Assembly, through the Secretary-General, reports on the implementation of the programme of activities of the Decade.

5. The General Assembly, by its resolution 52/108, decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

II. United Nations meetings

A. Commission on Human Rights

6. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights considered questions pertaining to indigenous people under the agenda item entitled "Indigenous issues". The Commission adopted three resolutions concerning indigenous people.

International Decade

7. With regard to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the Commission, *inter alia*, invited the United Nations institutions, programmes and specialized agencies to give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people within their areas of competence. The Commission also encouraged Governments to support the Decade in consultation with indigenous people by, *inter alia*, preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade and establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people.

Working group on the establishment of a permanent forum

8. The Commission decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc inter-sessional working group, from within existing overall resources, to elaborate and consider further proposals for the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system. Participation in the ad hoc working group will be in accordance with the same procedures agreed upon for the working group on a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people, established in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32 and its annex.

Working group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

9. The third session of the working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people was held in Geneva from 20 October to 7 November 1997. Ten of the 45 articles in the draft were discussed at the session in 1997. Two articles were adopted: article 5, which provides the right to all indigenous people to have a nationality; and article 43, which provides for gender equality. There was also broad consensus for the principles underlying articles 15 (educational rights); 16 (diversity and non-discrimination);

17 (information and media); and 18 (labour rights). The fourth session of the working group on the draft declaration is due to be held in Geneva from 12 to 23 October 1998.

B. Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

10. At its fiftieth session, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities considered indigenous issues under the agenda item entitled "Human rights of indigenous peoples".

11. In the context of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People the Subcommission recommended that the Commission on Human Rights request the Economic and Social Council to authorize the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a three-day technical meeting immediately prior to the seventeenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in order to undertake the mid-point review of the Decade, as requested in the General Assembly in resolutions 50/157 and 52/108. The Subcommission emphasized the importance of ensuring the greatest possible indigenous participation at such a technical meeting.

C. Working Group on Indigenous Populations

12. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations meets for one week immediately before the annual session of the Subcommission, in order to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. The Working Group is also mandated to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous people.

13. At its sixteenth session, the Working Group, meeting in Geneva from 27 to 31 July 1998, considered 13 agenda items, including an item entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

14. The Working Group welcomed the comments and suggestions of participants relating to the International Decade and reaffirmed its willingness to assist the Coordinator of the Decade in the realization of the programme of activities of the Decade.

15. The Working Group expressed its gratitude for the contributions made by Governments and non-governmental organizations to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade. It also called upon Governments that had not contributed to the Voluntary Fund to assist financially the activities of the Decade.

16. The Working Group recommended to its parent body, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, that it propose to the Commission on Human Rights that a three-day technical meeting take place prior to the seventeenth session of the Working Group, to undertake the mid-point review of the Decade, as recommended in General Assembly resolution 50/157.

17. The Working Group recommended that the celebration (in Geneva) of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People (9 August) be held during its seventeenth session in order to ensure as great as possible participation on the part of indigenous people.

III. Activities undertaken by the major actors in 1998

18. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly encouraged the United Nations system, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other interested parties to support the Decade by adopting programmes and identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people.

A. Observance of the International Day

19. In its resolution 48/163, the General Assembly proclaimed 9 August as International Day of the World's Indigenous People. The General Assembly has requested a formal observance each year on the International Day, in New York, Geneva and other offices of the United Nations.

20. The fourth commemoration of the International Day was organized at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The International Day was marked at Headquarters by a sacred pipe ceremony and songs and dances honouring indigenous peoples of the world. Indigenous leaders and elders from around the world gathered for the commemoration. A panel discussion on land and natural resources was also held as part of the commemoration.

21. At the United Nations Office at Geneva, a half-day cultural event was organized by the Indigenous Fellowship Programme at the Office of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights, during the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Indigenous representatives from around the world shared their cultural expressions with the Working Group and other interested people. Several hundred indigenous and governmental representatives from all parts of the world participated in the commemoration.

22. In his message for the International Day, the Secretary-General said that the Day was an opportunity to reflect upon the diversity of indigenous cultures and reaffirm the international community's commitment to the world's indigenous people, wherever they live. He said that the Day provided an opportunity to raise public awareness about indigenous people's distinctive ways of life, languages, customs and traditions, and contribution to culture worldwide.

23. The Secretary-General said that the United Nations system was increasingly active in promoting the rights of indigenous people and developing programmes which would bring lasting benefits to indigenous communities. He said that international cooperation was firmly established as a policy framework under the theme of "Indigenous people: partnership in action". Furthermore, the Secretary-General stated that, in the anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we should reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that those rights were truly universal for all people of the world, including the world's indigenous people.

24. In her message, the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Coordinator of the Decade, focused on the principal theme of the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations: Indigenous people: education and language. She emphasized the fundamental importance of language and education for indigenous communities. She said that the unique languages of indigenous peoples were a source of unity and community. As for education, it had played and continued to play a significant role in opening opportunities for indigenous peoples in their efforts to be treated without discrimination.

25. The High Commissioner stated that the international community should renew its efforts to ensure access of indigenous peoples to all forms and levels of education. Furthermore, the international community should welcome and support the actions being taken by indigenous communities to take control once again of the destinies of their peoples.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Indigenous Peoples Programme

26. An indigenous project team has been established within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that indigenous issues are dealt with in a consistent and comprehensive manner. The work carried out on indigenous issues constitutes an integrated cross-branch programme. The policy objectives, overall programme and priorities are developed bearing in mind the functional approach of the three branches within the Office of the High Commissioner.

27. The team is composed of two professional staff members; one regular staff member and one indigenous secondment funded since May 1996 by the Government of Norway.

28. The Governments of France and the Netherlands have pledged to second and fund a consultant and an associate expert, respectively, earmarked for the Indigenous Peoples Programme. The individuals to fill the posts have already been selected, and it is expected that both will take up their positions before the end of 1998.

Inter-Agency Consultation

29. The annual Inter-Agency Consultation on Indigenous People, held this year at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 24 July, was organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The meeting was attended by eight United Nations agencies. Five governmental observers took part in discussions related to funding of the activities of the Decade. Various issues were discussed, including ideas and proposals for improving the participation of indigenous people in United Nations activities.

Workshops/seminars

30. In its resolution 1996/34, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recommended that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights organize a workshop, with the participation of appropriate departments of the United Nations and other relevant institutions and persons, in order to improve the dissemination of information about the United Nations and its activities related to indigenous people. Accordingly, a workshop for indigenous journalists was held in Madrid, Spain, from 26 to 28 January 1998. It was funded by the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

31. The workshop adopted a programme to strengthen the indigenous media during the Decade. It was recommended, *inter alia*, that responsible organizations and institutions should develop training and educational activities for helping indigenous media workers improve their professional and technical skills and elaborate strategies for advocacy communication through training workshops, scholarships, internships and other initiatives.

32. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a seminar on the draft principles and guidelines for the protection of the heritage of indigenous people. The draft principles and guidelines are proposed by the Special Rapporteur, Prof. Erica-Irene A. Daes. The seminar is due to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 2 to 4 November 1998.

Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

33. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, established by the General Assembly in resolution 40/131, provides financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to enable them to attend sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. In its resolution 50/156, the General Assembly decided that the Fund should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Fund is administered by a board of trustees. The five members, who all are indigenous individuals, are appointed by the Secretary-General.

34. At its meeting in Geneva from 30 March to 1 April 1998, the Board of Trustees awarded 50 travel grants (US$ 144,250) to indigenous representatives, to enable them to attend the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The Board also awarded three travel grants (US$ 11,126) to indigenous representatives attending the working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration. However, around US$ 50,000 are still available in the Fund, and the Board recommended that the Secretariat invite indigenous organizations to continue to apply for travel grants for their participation in the Commission's working group. The extended deadline for applications was set for 31 July 1998. The Board will consider the applications by the end of August 1998. (See also the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations," also submitted under agenda item 110.)

Voluntary Fund for the International Decade

35. The Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, established by the General Assembly by resolution 49/214, provides financial assistance to indigenous projects and programmes during the Decade. An advisory group is appointed by the Secretary-General to assist the High Commissioner for Human Rights as coordinator of the Decade. The Advisory Group is composed of the members of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and the Chairperson/Rapporteur of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

36. At its third session, held from 2 to 8 April 1998, the Advisory Group examined 43 applications for project grants, taking into consideration the selection criteria, the mandate of the Fund and the limited resources available (on the mandate of the Fund, see A/52/509 para. 27, E/CN.4/1998/107 and General Assembly resolutions 48/163, 49/214 and 50/157). The Group recommended that 13 project grants be awarded, for a total of US$ 139,016. The High Commissioner for Human Rights approved these recommendations.

37. The following projects were awarded a grant:

(a) Comisión Jurídica para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Originarios Andino "Capaj": monthly edition of *Boletin Andino*, Peru, $3,600;

(b) Saqb'e Mayab' Moloj: publication of the children's newspaper *Kukuy*, Guatemala, $5,000;

(c) Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal Indigena Nahuat (ADESCOIN): rescue of the Nahuat language and support of the Nahuat School, El Salvador, $21,400;

(d) Asociación de Mujeres Agricultoras Indigenas de Cabagra y Bolas: creativity of women in human rights, non violence and Mother Earth, Costa Rica, $15,000;

(e) Mamalo Descendants organization: codification of traditional laws, the Timuway system of governance, Philippines, $10,000;

(f) Organization for Survival of Il-Laikipiak Indigenous Massai Group Initiatives (OSILIGI): organizational capacity-building strategy, Kenya, $10,000;

(g) Conseil national pour les droits du peuples autochtones de la Nouvelle Calédonie: elaboration of a charter of the Kanak people to enhance the recognition of indigenous rights, New Caledonia/France, $9,016;

(h) Comunidad Mapuche Nicolas Ailio: capacity-building of the community, Chile, $5,000;

(i) Chotanagpur Adivasi Sewa Samiti: building Adivasi people's organization for protection of their rights in the face of mining and displacement, India, $10,000;

(j) Association des femmes refugiées de l'Azouad au Burkina Faso (AFRAB): Educational project, Burkina Faso, $10,000;

(k) Scientific Research Centre for Forest-dependent and Aboriginal People: Information system, indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation and new mechanisms for the protection of their rights, Russian Federation, $15,000;

(l) Association pour la promotion des Batwa: Batwa Cultural Centre, Rwanda, $5,000;

(m) Comité nacional del Decenio de las poblaciones indígenas del mundo: functioning of the Mexican indigenous office, Mexico, $20,000.

38. The Advisory Group approved the principle of organizing a workshop of research institutes and institutions of higher education focusing on indigenous issues in education, as recommended by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1997/32 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/108, for a total amount of about $60,000. Funds have to be raised for this purpose.

39. The Advisory Group noted with satisfaction that all the recommendations adopted at its second session had been implemented: work on the United Nations guide for indigenous peoples had started; the Workshop of Indigenous Journalists had been successfully organized in Madrid in January 1998, with the cooperation of the Government of Spain (E/CN.4/1998/107, paras. 14–16), and the Workshop on the Permanent Forum was held in Santiago, Chile (A/52/509, paras. 33–37).

40. Ten project grants for indigenous organizations, a grant for the organization of a seminar by the Government of Bolivia and a grant for a joint project with UNESCO, recommended and approved in 1997, were paid on 3 March 1998. The organizations have been requested to submit narrative and financial reports on the use of these grants by 30 September 1998.

41. Eleven project grants approved in 1998 for indigenous organizations have been paid. The narrative and financial reports on the use of these grants should be submitted by 1 December 1998.

42. From 1 December 1997 to 31 July 1998 the Fund received the following new contributions: Canada, $10,426 (9 December 1997); Cyprus, $1,000 (12 May 1998); Denmark, $146,886 (12 December 1997); Greece, $3,000 (14 April 1998); Japan, $50,000 (19 March 1998); Norway, $68,552 (30 December 1997); Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 10,000 Australian dollars (26 June 1998). The annex lists contributions received since 1996 by the Fund.

43. Almost all of the resources available to the Fund were allocated to the above-mentioned activities in 1998, continuation of the Indigenous Fellowship Programme for four fellows for six months, and the holding of the third session of the Advisory Group.

44. After allocation of the funds at the third session, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, about $16,000 was left in the Fund. As at 31 July 1998, with new contributions, a total amount of $70,129 was available, not including a contribution made by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and before deducting programme support costs and the operating cash reserve. This amount is not sufficient for new activities in 1999 to be carried out by the Secretariat or upon recommendation of the Advisory Group.

45. An estimated amount of $500,000 would be necessary to cover activities provisionally envisaged for 1999.

Indigenous fellowship programme

46. In the annex to its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly recommended that an indigenous fellowship programme be created within the United Nations to assist indigenous people gain experience of the United Nations system. In 1997 the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Coordinator of the Decade set aside funds from the Trust Fund for the Decade to cover costs of a pilot fellowship programme. The fellowship includes travel to Geneva, accommodation, health insurance, and a monthly grant to cover other expenses.

47. The aim of the programme is to give indigenous individuals the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in the field of international human rights, in general, and on indigenous rights, in particular, in order to assist their organizations and communities in promoting and protecting the human rights of their people. The programme is designed for indigenous individuals, supported by their organizations and communities, who are committed to the understanding and promotion of international human rights and the process of development and implementation of international human rights standards.

48. The Indigenous Fellowship Programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for 1998 runs from 1 June to 30 November in Geneva. Four indigenous individuals, Ms. Saoudata Aboubacrine (Mali);

Mr. Estebancio Castro Diaz (Panama); Ms. Tracey Te Aroha Whare (New Zealand); and Ms. Jennifer Williams (United States), were awarded fellowships in 1998. One indigenous individual from Canada, Ms. Tracy McHugh, was accepted as a self-funded fellow, her participation being funded by her own organization, the Assembly of First Nations.

C. The United Nations system

49. In July 1998, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) organized a round table on Indigenous Intellectual Property. The round table sought to facilitate an exchange of views and information concerning the protection of traditional indigenous knowledge, innovations and culture; allow for full and effective participation by the participating indigenous groups; and enable participants to listen to and learn from representatives of indigenous people and local communities as to their needs and expectations.

50. In 1998 WIPO launched a programme of activities relating to the identification and exploration of new approaches to the use of the intellectual property system by the world's indigenous peoples, local communities and other holders, custodians and creators of traditional knowledge. The programme of activities is being carried out primarily by the new Global Intellectual Property Issues Division, which has, as part of its duties, the exploration and investigation of the needs and expectations of potential new beneficiaries of intellectual property. Indigenous peoples, local communities and holders and creators of traditional knowledge have been identified by WIPO as the first group of potential new beneficiaries.

51. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a resolution on the implementation of article 8 (j) and related provisions of the Convention. It is stated in article 8 (j), *inter alia*, that States shall, as far as possible and as appropriate, respect preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

52. The Conference of the Parties decided that an ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group be established to address the implementation of article 8 (j) and related provisions of the Convention. The working group is reporting directly to the Conference of the Parties.

53. The mandate of the working group is to:

(a) Provide advice on the application and development of legal and other appropriate forms of protection for the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(b) Provide the Conference of the Parties with advice relating to the implementation of article 8 (j) and related provisions, in particular on the development and implementation of a programme of work at national and international levels;

(c) Develop a programme of work, based on the structure of the elements in the Madrid report (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/10/Add.1);

(d) Identify those objectives and activities falling within the scope of the Convention and recommend priorities, taking into account the medium-term programme of work of Conference of the Parties;

(e) Provide advice to the Conference of the Parties on measures to strengthen cooperation at the international level among indigenous and local communities and make proposals for the strengthening of mechanisms that support such cooperation.

54. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is supporting and participating in the Indigenous Knowledge Programme, together with the International Development Research Centre, the Swiss Cooperation, and the Governments of Norway and Denmark. The Programme is an initiative of the Indigenous People Biodiversity Network. The Steering Committee of the Programme is comprised of a general coordinator and eight regional coordinators, all representatives of local indigenous organizations.

55. The UNDP Partners in Development Programme (PDP) has several projects which focus on indigenous people. The Governments of Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Philippines have explicitly dedicated their PDP-II projects to support for indigenous people, while others, such as the Governments of Bolivia, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal, provide indirect support. PDP provides project grants to organizations of indigenous people.

56. In July 1998, UNDP supported an interregional workshop of the International Alliance of the Indigenous and Tribal People of the Tropical Forests, with a financial contribution of $50,000.

57. In its resolution WHA51.24 of May 1998, the World Health Assembly urges its member States to develop and implement national plans of action or programmes on indigenous peoples' health. Furthermore, it requests the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO)

to promote the inclusion of indigenous health in its work programme at the country, regional and global level.

58. WHO is currently developing a programme of action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, in consultation with national Governments and indigenous organizations. In 1995, WHO created an Indigenous People Substance Use Project whose overall aim is to assist in the healthy development of indigenous people and communities through the prevention and minimization to individual, family and community of problems related to the use of, production of, trafficking in and supplying of psychoactive substances (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and substances which people use and when ingested produces a change in mental processes and behaviour). The Project focuses on preventing the harmful use of psychoactive substances and minimizing any harm already occurring.

59. WHO has ongoing activities in such areas as quality-of-life assessment, traditional medicine, substance abuse, the mental health of indigenous peoples.

60. The International Labour Organization (ILO) approach in the area of indigenous and tribal peoples falls within two major areas: supervision of the two conventions relating to indigenous and tribal peoples, and the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention No. 107 (1957) and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 (1989), and technical assistance. Convention No. 107 is closed for ratification but remains valid for those countries that have ratified it. Ratifications of Convention No. 169, which revises Convention No. 107, continue to be received. The total number of ratifications as of August 1998 is 13, with ratifications from Ecuador, Fiji and the Netherlands received during the past year.

61. Since the beginning of the International Decade, the ILO has initiated a number of technical cooperation projects and programmes to increase awareness of the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples and to promote improvements in their living and working conditions. All ILO technical assistance programmes are implemented within the framework of relevant ILO standards, in particular Convention No. 169.

62. The ILO Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which began operation in 1996, is a technical cooperation project financed by DANIDA. The Project is managed by two indigenous and tribal persons, and has, since its inception in 1996, cooperated with Governments, trade unions and others to draw attention to the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples, with an emphasis on Asia and southern Africa. The ILO's Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and other Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO), which began operation in 1993 under an ILO/DANIDA programme for cooperative development in rural areas, is designed especially to assist indigenous and tribal peoples. INDISCO has a number of pilot projects in India and the Philippines, and operations are just beginning in Belize, Viet Nam and Thailand.

63. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized an Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, in Stockholm, Sweden, from 30 March to 2 April 1998. During the Conference, a seminar on Indigenous Cultural Rights was organized by UNESCO, in cooperation with an indigenous organization, the Saami Council.

64. The World Bank is currently working on its approach paper on revision of its operational document (OD 4.20) on indigenous peoples, which was issued in 1991. The document emphasizes the need for indigenous peoples to participate in and benefit from Bank-financed development projects. It also outlines special procedures for incorporating the concerns of indigenous peoples into Bank-financed investments through the design of indigenous peoples development plans. The Bank is currently reviewing all of its operational policies, in an effort to improve its menu of policies and ensure greater compliance, especially with safeguard policies. Safeguard policies establish minimum standards that all Bank country departments and task teams must comply with in their investment decisions and operations.

D. Regional organizations

65. The Directorate General for Development of the European Commission organized a workshop on indigenous people and development cooperation, in Brussels from 12 to 13 March 1998. The workshop was organized as part of the ongoing process of preparing a European policy on indigenous people and development cooperation. The aim is to address development cooperation, not to develop a general European policy on indigenous peoples. However, the policy will establish basic principles for cooperation with indigenous peoples and integrate the theme in the general work of the European Community.

E. Member States

66. The Government of New Zealand hosted the Third "Healing our Spirit" Worldwide Conference in February 1998. The aim of the Healing our Spirit conferences is to provide a forum for indigenous people worldwide to network and share resources, research and information associated with the prevention and treatment of ill health relating to psychoactive substances. The objective is to promote the healthy development of indigenous people and communities from developed and developing countries.

67. The Government of Spain hosted the Workshop for Indigenous Journalists, held in Madrid in January 1998. Matters such as indigenous issues in the mainstream press, Strengthening the indigenous media, and Indigenous journalists and the United Nations, were discussed at the workshop.

68. An International Training Centre of Indigenous People has been established at the Katuaq Cultural Centre, Nuuk, Greenland. The Centre is offering intensive and comprehensive summer training courses to indigenous people around the world. It is envisaged as an independent educational resource dedicated to increasing the capacity of indigenous people for effective work in national and international affairs.

69. The Government of Japan has initiated programmes with the goal of improving the lives of the Ainu people in all fields, including areas such as education, culture, environment and economy. The Government of Japan has enacted a law for the promotion of the Ainu culture and for the dissemination and advocacy of the traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu culture. For the purpose of implementing the law, the Government of Japan has allocated a sum equivalent to $2.33 million in the current fiscal year.

70. In May 1998, the Government of Estonia adopted a programme for Uralic indigenous peoples. The main areas covered are culture, education and information. Ten million Estonian Krooni (equivalent to $700,000) will be allocated annually , from 1999 to 2004, for the implementation of the programme. Furthermore, in order to enable 30 indigenous Uralic indigenous students to start or continue their studies at Tartu University, the Government has allocated 1.6 million Estonian Krooni (about $116,000) in 1998.

71. The Government of Australia is giving priority to addressing the disadvantaged state of indigenous people in key socio-economic areas. Increased funds have been allocated for improving the health conditions of indigenous people. There are also a number of recent initiatives aimed at increasing the literacy and numeracy skills of indigenous students.

72. In January 1998, the Government of Canada released its response to the Royal Commission's report on aboriginal peoples. The response, entitled "Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan", aims to help local governments, aboriginal people, the private sector and others work together to find and implement solutions to problems faced by indigenous peoples. The Government of Canada has made a statement of reconciliation in which it expresses regret for the many past policies and actions that have eroded the political, economic and social systems of aboriginal people and nations. A sum of 350 million Canadian dollars has been allocated to develop a community-based healing strategy to assist aboriginal people who were the victims of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools. Progress has also been made in discussions pertaining to indigenous self-government. A number of final self-government agreements have recently been signed, and the Government is currently engaged in 85 separate self-government negotiations across the country, involving over one half of Canada's First Nations and Inuit communities.

73. In New Zealand, changes to the electoral system have led to significantly increased Maori political representation. A special provision is made in the Electoral Act for Maori Representation in Parliament. Maori have the option of enroling on either the Maori electoral roll or the general roll. The Maori unemployment rate remains significantly higher than that of non-Maori, and the Government has therefore put in place employment initiatives specially aimed at Maori. The Government of New Zealand has developed a strategy to encourage economic development for Maori in the tourism industry. The Government's education strategy focuses on identifying how the educational system can be more responsive to the needs of Maori, in order to further the goal of achieving educational parity between Maori and non-Maori. The Government has established four Maori commissions, covering health, education, employment and training, and economic employment. Furthermore, a number of activities within the framework of the Decade is focusing on capacity-building.

74. The Government of Brazil has demarcated 11 per cent of the Brazilian territory to indigenous peoples. The Government reports that it deployed every reasonable effort to speed up the process of demarcation of indigenous lands in 1998. A new education policy has been adopted, in accordance with new Constitutional requirements. The policy takes into account the fact that there are 170 indigenous languages and dialects in Brazil, spoken by around 400,000 persons. Special attention is therefore paid

to the fact that those indigenous peoples have their own forms of teaching and learning, based on oral transmission of collective as well as individual knowledge. In June 1998, the Government signed an agreement on the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Development Fund for Latin-America and the Caribbean (Fondo para el Desarollo de los Pueblos Indigenas de America Latina y del Caribe).

75. The Government of the United States of America reports that the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs has budgeted approximately $17.2 million for bilingual education for around 28,000 indigenous students from kindergarten through grade 12 during fiscal year 1998.

76. The Government of Norway reports that for the first time in history a separate integrated Sami curriculum has been designed for the compulsory education system (primary and lower secondary school). It is an integrated curriculum which does not involve supplementary curricula for individual subjects. It is based upon the belief that the Sami language and culture are part of a heritage which Norway has a special responsibility to safeguard.

F. Indigenous organizations

77. In February 1998, Asociacion Napguana, an indigenous organization in Panama, organized an international indigenous conference on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system. The conference was held in Kuna Yala, Panama, from 3 to 6 March 1998. Participants discussed issues such as the United Nations system and the possible functions of a permanent forum; the mandate, level and composition of a permanent forum; and participation and membership.

78. The Saami Council, in cooperation with UNESCO, organized a seminar on indigenous cultural rights in Stockholm, Sweden. The seminar was a side-event of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in Stockholm from 30 March to 2 April 1998.

IV. Final observations

79. In its resolution 50/157 the General Assembly invited the United Nations financial and development institutions, operational programmes and specialized agencies to give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, *inter alia*, by the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence; launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people, for strengthening their community-level initiatives, and facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts; and designate focal points, for coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for activities related to the Decade.

80. The General Assembly emphasized the importance of action at the national level. Governments were encouraged to support the Decade by contributing to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade; preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people; seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters which affect them; establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people.

81. Gratitude is expressed to the donors of contributions for the Voluntary Fund for the Decade. New donors are encouraged to contribute for the first time, and former donors are encouraged to contribute on a regular basis and, if possible, to increase their contributions.

82. In its resolutions 50/157 and 52/108, the General Assembly expresses the view that the objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes which can be evaluated halfway through the Decade and at its end.

83. At the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the Greenland Home Rule Government and the Sami Parliaments in Finland, Norway and Sweden proposed holding a technical meeting immediately prior to the seventeenth session of the Working Group, in order to undertake a review of the Decade and suggest possible changes to its programme of activities. This proposal has been endorsed by many indigenous organizations.

84. An evaluation of the first five years of the Decade is important in making the rest of the Decade a success. The existing programme of activities for the Decade should therefore be examined and adjusted on the basis of the experiences of the first five years.

Annex

Contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People[a]

Donor	*Amount in US$*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Paid on*
Australia	31 920	Geneva	14.05.1996
Canada	11 095	Geneva	23.01.1996
	10 799	Geneva	04.03.1997
	10 426	Geneva	09.12.1997
Cyprus	1 485	New York	15.04.1996
	1 000	Geneva	12.05.1998
Denmark	168 186	Geneva	07.01.1997
	146 886	Geneva	12.12.1997
Fiji	3 000	New York	09.01.1997
Greece	3 000	Geneva	09.05.1996
	3 000	Geneva	03.06.1997
	3 000	Geneva	14.04.1998
Japan	50 000	New York	30.04.1996
	50 000	New York	31.03.1997
	50 000	New York	19.03.1998
Norway	68 552	Geneva	30.12.1997
New Zealand	16 680	New York	22.04.1996
	6 779	New York	16.07.1996
Sweden	61 633	Geneva	14.08.1997
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	7 976	Geneva	15.05.1996
	7 408[b]	Geneva	02.07.1997
		Geneva	26.06.1998
Alliance of Taiwan Indigenous Culture	300	Geneva	22.10.1997
Intuition Music, Inc. DBA Sequoia Records	25	Geneva	14.02.1996
	25	Geneva	01.03.1996
	25	Geneva	15.03.1996
	50	Geneva	06.05.1996
	50	Geneva	15.05.1996
	50	Geneva	26.07.1996
	50	Geneva	22.08.1996
	100	Geneva	08.11.1996
	50	Geneva	10.12.1996
	50	Geneva	23.12.1996
	150	Geneva	18.02.1997
	50	Geneva	04.07.1997
	50	Geneva	14.04.1997
	50	Geneva	09.05.1997
	50	Geneva	19.06.1997
	50	Geneva	25.08.1997
	50	Geneva	18.09.1997
	50	Geneva	16.10.1997
	50	Geneva	19.11.1997
	50	Geneva	09.12.1997
	50	Geneva	06.02.1998
	50	Geneva	13.03.1998
	50	Geneva	25.03.1998
	50	Geneva	01.05.1998

Donor	*Amount in US$*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Paid on*
E. Stamatopoulou	800	Geneva	05.01.1996

[a] Contributions received from 1 January 1996 to 31 July 1998, based on official receipts available at UNHCHR.

[b] 10,000 Australian dollars. Amount in United States dollars is not yet available.